(b) The Port Authorities have issued instructions to the Agents/Stevedores to ensure that handling of sulphur, coal, iron scrap etc. should not result in pollution and discomfort to other users of the port. Steps taken include—

— Sprinkling of water to reduce dust.

— Covering of trucks with tarpaulins.

— Earmarking of routes for transport and storages of coal, sulphur and other bulk materials.

— Installations of screens near storage area to prevent dust.

— Monitoring of pollution.

(c) In view of the above, does not arise.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. Vessels bringing sulphur, coal or iron scrap etc. are normally berthed only at Mattancherry Wharf except when vessels are coming in deeper draft. In such cases also, once the draft is reduced, the vessels are immediately shifted to Mattancherry Wharf for unloading the cargo.

Funds for National Highways Damaged due to Natural Calamities in Maharashtra

3454. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of damage caused to National Highways by natural calamities and heavy traffic during the last 3 years, and the funds provided and actually utilised by the Maharashtra Government during that period;

(b) whether the funds for major repairs and maintenance of National Highways are far too inadequate in view of deteriorating conditions of the National Highways in Maharashtra if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of the proposals received from the State Government in this regard; and

(d) the details of action taken thereon and outlay proposed for 1997-98 for National Highways in the State?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) to (c) Damages to National Highways do occur on account of natural calamities and heavy movement of traffic, but funds for M&R (Maintenance and Repair Works) are allocated to States keeping in view various factors, inter-alia, the traffic intensity, climatic conditions, terrain, soil, etc. However, the fund for Maintenace and Repair for the country as a whole as available is about 45% of the requirements. Within the funds available, during the last three years, Maharashtra has been allocated Rs. 8006.82 lakhs for Maintenance and Repairs including Rs. 603.95 lakhs for Flood Damage Repair Works. These funds have been fully utilised by the State Govt. of Maharashtra.

(d) Since the budget for 1997-98 is yet to be approved, it is too early to give the proposed outlay for 1997-98.

Import and Export through Ports

3455. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether ninety percent of goods meant for imports into and exports out of the country are transported through ports of the country;

(b) if so, the names of ports of the country being utilised for the purpose;

(c) whether the condition of these ports is very serious, lacking in all infrastructure available in ports of developed countries and non-provision of containers handling facilities etc.;

(d) whether Government propose to take some steps to improve condition of these ports; and

(e) if so, the details thereof with names of ports of Andhra Pradesh to be benefited and if not, the reasons therefor?